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DOCUMENTS.

At a Meeting of the Committee of the Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty, held at the New London Tavern, Cheapside, the 29th day of July, 1812,

SAMUEL MILLS, Esq. in the Chair.

1st. Resolved, That this committee, which has the honour to represent the Protestant friends of Religious Liberty—the most numerous congregations of Dissenters and Calvinistic Methodists in the metropolis—and many hundred congregations of various denominations, in England and Wales, will invariably maintain that liberty of conscience is an unalienable right of all mankind, which ought ever to be held most sacred, and that the enjoyment of such liberty must be incomplete as long as any man can lawfully interrupt their enjoyment—and that their efforts shall therefore be persevering to obtain the repeal of every penal law which prevents the complete enjoyment of religious liberty.

2d. That this committee cannot receive the act which has this day obtained the Royal assent, “For repealing certain acts, and amending other acts relating to religious worship and assemblies, and persons teaching or preaching therein,” with perfect satisfaction:—yet as that act will repeal Statutes so justly obnoxious, as the Five mile and Conventicle acts, as it will increase the toleration and protection before enjoyed, and as it indicates the existence of liberal opinions in the administration and the legislature, this committee accept that measure with considerable delight, and cherish fervent gratitude to all the persons by whose efforts the benefit has been obtained.

3d. That, to the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Liverpool, First Lord of the Treasury, &c. they must therefore express their sincere and ardent thanks, for his polite and respectful attention to the communications of this committee, for the frank and conciliatory proceedings he adopted, for the liberal sentiments he repeatedly expressed, and for the persevering kindness with which he afforded to the act his constant and powerful support.

4th. That their thanks be also presented to the Rt. Hon. Lord Eldon, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain; to the Rt. Hon. Lord Castlereagh, one of his Majes-

ty's principal Secretaries of State; to the Rt. Hon. Nicholas Vansittart, Chancellor of the Exchequer; and to the other Members of Administration who have introduced and supported this act, and contributed to its success by their meritorious and friendly exertions.

5th. That approving of the principles asserted by the Rt. Hon. Earl Stanhope in the Bill which he introduced to Parliament, for the abrogation of all penal laws restricting the freedom of religious worship, and grateful for the assistance which he has cheerfully afforded during the progress of the act. This committee request him to accept their assurances of high consideration and of unaffected respect.

6th. That this committee would manifest inattention and ingratitude, if they neglected any opportunity to announce their grateful esteem to the Rt. Hon. Lord Holland, for his recent exertions in their favour, and for the zeal which he has invariably manifested in the great cause of Religious Liberty.

7th. That the direct or practical support promised or afforded to this committee, by the Dukes of Norfolk and Bedford; Marquisses Landsdowne and Douglas; Earls Oxford, Carnarvon, Moira, Darnley, Donoughmore, Grey, Rosslyn, and Lauderdale, and Lord Erskine; and by Thomas Brand, Esq. M.P.; James Stephen, Esq. M.P.; William Wilberforce, Esq. M.P.; and other Members of both Houses of Parliament, and the spontaneous alacrity manifested by Samuel Whitbread, Esq. M.P. to advocate the rights of Protestant Dissenters when assailed by new and detrimental constructions of the acts of toleration, entitle these noblemen and gentlemen to the animated and grateful acknowledgements of this committee.

8. That the solicitous anxiety for the removal of all obstructions to the promulgation of religious truth, and the love of Religious Liberty displayed by “the Committee for Guarding the Privileges of the Methodist Society,” in their cordial co-operation with this committee merit ardent praise, and justify expectations of their future assistance and undiminished support.

9th. That the judicious, zealous, and indefatigable exertions of Thomas Pellatt

and John Wilks, Esqrs., the Secretaries to this committee, have essentially contributed to their present success, and deserve their highest approbation, and warmest thanks.

10th. That these Resolutions be publicly advertised, signed by the chairman, and be respectfully communicated to the noblemen and gentlemen to whom they relate.

SAMUEL MILLS, Chairman.

11th. That the wise and impartial conduct of the chairman, not only at the present meeting, but upon every occasion, has obtained for him the permanent and increasing esteem of this committee.

MR. WYVILL'S PETITION.

(Presented by Mr. Whitbread, during the late session; with nearly 10,000 signatures.)

To the Hon. the Commons of Great Britain, in Parliament assembled.

The humble petition of the undersigned being Protestants dissenting from the Church of England, or,
(Protestant Christians.)

Showeth,

That it is the duty of all men to examine as diligently as may be in their power, the doctrines of religion, and, after such diligent examination, to adopt and to profess what may appear to them to be the truth; and that, in the performance of that duty, men ought not to be obstructed, or discouraged, or otherwise tempted to act hypocritically, by any law, tending to bias them in the course of such examination of the doctrines of religion, by subjecting them, in the case of their dissenting from the doctrines of any established church, to suffer death by burning or otherwise, or to suffer any corporal or pecuniary punishment, or to be injured in their reputation by any disability, more or less disgraceful.

That your petitioners acknowledge, with high satisfaction, that, in the present reign, considerable progress has been made towards the full restoration of the rights of conscience, by the wisdom of Parliament, and the benignity of the King rescinding various laws, in whole or in part, which were violations of those rights; yet, since other penal laws, not less injurious to those rights, remain unrepealed, since some of these laws subject to corporal punish-

ments, or pecuniary penalties, others, as in the case of the Test Laws, passed in the reign of Charles II., subject to disgrace, disability, and privation of civil rights, persons whose only offence it is, that in conformity with their duty, they have examined the doctrines of religion, and by such examination, have been induced to embrace and to profess religious opinions different from the doctrines of the established church: Your petitioners feel it to be their duty, humbly, but earnestly, to remonstrate against the longer continuance of any of these intolerant laws, and they do, in conformity with the premises, expressly petition this Honourable House, that every such unjust law may be repealed, and the Rights of Conscience may thus be restored to all the subjects of this United Kingdom. And your petitioners humbly beg leave to add, that this request, as it appears to them, is grounded on the most evident considerations of justice; and they trust, that the compliance of the state would yet conciliate the affection of millions of our aggrieved fellow subjects, and unite them for ever to the interest of the empire. Under each of these aspects, their request claims, and they hope will be found to deserve, the assent of this Honourable House, as they are statesmen, anxious for the safety of their country, and as they are moralists, determined to act impartially on the rules of justice. But, when your petitioners consider farther, that every attempt to influence men in the choice and profession of religion, by penal laws, whether corrupt or compulsive in their operation, is contrary to the spirit of the gospel, and forbidden by its plainest precepts in numerous passages, they hope it may be allowed them more particularly, and with all possible earnestness, to intreat the members of this Honourable House to renounce the whole system of persecution, the long accumulation of ages of barbarism and discord, and to free an almost countless multitude of injured individuals from the temptation of ensnaring tests, and the more oppressive severities of our compulsive intolerance, by the success of such salutary councils, at once restoring concord and safety to the empire, and freeing the national church from that just reproach of retaining the support which persecuting laws may be supposed to bestow, but which Christianity condemns, and would disdain to accept.